

Duplicate

THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE EVENTS WHICH PRECEDED AND TOOK PLACE IN OUR FINAL DAYS IN SAIGON, AS SEEN BY ME.

APPROXIMATELY 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO 29 APRIL 1975, PREPARATION AND PLANS FOR A POSSIBLE EVACUATION OF SAIGON WERE INTENSIFIED.

THESE INCLUDED:

(1) REQUESTING ALL AMERICAN AND TCN PERSONNEL TO MOVE TO CENTRAL LOCATIONS, IN THE FINAL DAYS APPROXIMATELY 10, SLEEPING AREAS WERE ARRANGED FOR AT THE COMPANY AREA AND THE TCN EMPLOYEES WERE URGED TO UTILIZE THESE.

(2) AIRCRAFT THAT WERE IN FLYABLE STORAGE CONDITION, OR NON-FLYABLE STORAGE, WERE BROUGHT BACK TO AN AIRWORTHY CONDITION.

(3) ICCS PAINT SCHEMES ON UH-1H AIRCRAFT, WHICH WERE NO LONGER ON CONTRACT, WERE REMOVED, LEAVING THE AIRCRAFT WITH COMPANY PAINT SCHEME, BUT WITH BLACK VERSUS BLUE.

(4) IT WAS RECOGNIZED AS FACT, THAT IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTACK, AIRCRAFT FUEL WOULD BE EXTREMELY HARD TO OBTAIN. THE FOLLOWING STEPS WERE TAKEN TO PRECLUDE THIS:

(A) JP-4 WAS STORED IN 55 GALLON DRUMS ALONG THE WEST WALL OF THE RAMP.

(B) HAND PUMPS WERE PLACED IN THE HELICOPTERS TO ENABLE REFUELING FROM THESE DRUMS.

(C) A REFUELING TRUCK (ESSO) HAD BEEN ARRANGED FOR AND WAS LEFT (FULL) EACH NIGHT AT OUR AREA.

(5) V-32 CON SON ISLAND WAS DESIGNATED AS AN ALTERNATE VOI TO BE UTILIZED AS A STAGING POINT AND OR REFUELING POINT, IF NECESSARY.

(A) FLY-AWAY KITS - WHICH INCLUDED COMMONLY USED SPARE PARTS FOR EACH TYPE AIRCRAFT WERE STORED AT

(B) FUEL WAS PROVIDED IN 55 GALLON DRUMS.

(6) FLIGHT HELMETS WERE ISSUED TO THE MAJORITY OF TCN GROUND MECHANICS, AND THEY WERE BRIEFED AS TO THEIR DUTIES, SHOULD THEY BE CALLED UPON TO ACT AS TEMPORARY FLIGHT MECHANICS ONBOARD THE HELICOPTERS IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, AND THE NON-AVAILABILITY OF REGULAR CABIN CREWS.

(7) IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ABOVE MENTIONED PLANS, NUMEROUS SMALL DETAILS WERE ALSO BEING CARRIED OUT. A FEW OF THESE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

APPROVED FOR
RELEASEDATE:
13-Mar-2009

FRANK ANTONI...

1. KEY BUILDINGS AROUND TOWN WERE DESIGNATED AS HELICOPTER PICK-UP PADS, AND WERE APPROPRIATELY MARKED. PERSONNEL WERE INFORMED AS TO THE HELICOPTER PAD CLOSEST TO THEIR RESIDENCE.

2. [PRC-25] FM RADIOS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO KEY PERSONNEL, WHO WOULD ASSUME THE DUTY OF HELI PAD COMMANDER.

3. RADIOS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO OTHER KEY PERSONNEL TO ENABLE CONSTANT COMMUNICATIONS.

4. COTS WERE PLACED IN EVERY AVAILABLE OFFICE SPACE, SHOULD THE NEED FOR SLEEPING WITHIN THE COMPOUND BECOME NECESSARY.

ON MONDAY, 28 APRIL 1975, I WAS RETURNING FROM LUNCH IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA; AS I DROVE ALONG CACH MANG STREET, ENROUTE TO THE AIRFIELD, I NOTICED SEVERAL OF THE SHOPS WERE SHUTTERED, AND WITNESSED A WOMAN DRAWING DOWN THE SHUTTERS ON A SMALL DELICATESSEN. BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE IN VIETNAM, THESE ACTIONS MEANT "TROUBLE" TO ME. UPON RETURNING TO THE HANGAR, I CALLED A SHORT MEETING WITH MY TWO SUPERVISORS, [RON LIECHTY AND PAUL DISCIULLO] PLUS THE LEADMEN, WHICH WERE ON DUTY. AT THIS MEETING, I INFORMED THEM THAT THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY WOULD REQUIRE A 100% MAXIMUM EFFORT ON EVERYONE'S PART AND THAT I FELT THIS WOULD BE OUR LAST DAY TO COMPLETE THE AIRCRAFT THAT WERE "WORK IN PROGRESS" AT THAT TIME. THOSE AIRCRAFT WERE: [N1307X] 100 HOUR INSPECTION IN PROGRESS; [004] UNDERGOING REMOVAL FROM STORAGE INSPECTION, AND [001] TEST FLIGHT IN PROGRESS DUE TO LOW ENGINE POWER. [N1307X AND N47004] WERE COMPLETED THAT EVENING AND [N47001] WAS RETURNED TO THE HANGAR DUE TROUBLE SHOOTING FAILED TO CORRECT THE ENGINE LOW POWER DISCREPANCY, AND I DETERMINED AN ENGINE CHANGE NECESSARY.

PRIOR TO LEAVING THE COMPANY AREA THAT EVENING, I INSTRUCTED THE SUPERVISOR ON DUTY [RON LEICHTY] THAT I WANTED THE PRIORITY

ON THE ENGINE CHANGE ON [A/C 001] LOWERED AND FOR THE CREW TO CONCENTRATE ON THE OVERNIGHT INSPECTIONS OF THE AIRCRAFT RETURNING FROM THEIR DAILY FLIGHTS AND TO INSURE THAT ALL AIRCRAFT WERE "FULL FUEL". IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT WOULD BE AIRWORTHY AND AVAILABLE.

AT APPROXIMATELY 1730 THAT EVENING, [BOYD MESECHER, DICK WENGENROTH AND MYSELF] DEPARTED THE COMPANY AREA ENROUTE TO THE [USAID APARTMENT] BUILDING, WHERE WE WERE SHARING AN APARTMENT. WE STOPPED BY WHERE WE CALLED THE "DEN" ON [CACH MANG STREET] AND WERE HAVING A COLD BEER - OUR FIRST ONE, AS A MATTER OF FACT WHEN WE HEARD A SERIES OF LARGE EXPLOSIONS, WHICH COULD EASILY BE IDENTIFIED AS AN AIR STRIKE, COMING FROM THE AIRFIELD. I RECALL THAT BOYD STARTED FOR THE DOOR IMMEDIATELY, AND I SHOUTED TO HIM TO STAND-BY --- THERE WAS NO NEED TO RUN OR RUSH.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ABOVE LOUD EXPLOSIONS, SEVERAL ROCKETS FOLLOWED. WHAT WAS LATER IDENTIFIED AS BOMBS DROPPED BY [A-37S] SMALL ARMS FIRE ERUPTED THROUGHOUT THE WESTERN EDGE OF TOWN. IT SEEMED AS THOUGH ALL THE SOLDIERS [CARVN TYPES] WHO HAD A RIFLE IMMEDIATELY STARTED FIRING IN THE AIR -- PANICKED! ! IT SEEMED TO ENGULF THE ENTIRE AREA -- PEOPLE WERE RUNNING, SCREAMING. WITHIN A FEW MOMENTS, WE WERE STILL INSIDE THE "DEN" AND WE HEARD ROTOR BLADES OVERHEAD -- A HELICOPTER MAKING A PASS. WE THEN WENT OUTSIDE AND LOOKING UP WE COULD SEE THAT ONE OF OUR COMPANY HELICOPTERS WAS FLYING A SERIES OF EVASIVE MANEUVERS, POSSIBLY THINKING HE WAS TAKING FIRE DUE TO THE SMALL ARMS THAT WAS RAPPING ALL AROUND TOWN. HE MADE AT LEAST TWO PASSES, I BELIEVE, [OVER 259] WHICH WAS THE USAID APARTMENT BUILDING, WHERE

WE HAD BEEN KEEPING A HELICOPTER EACH NIGHT, ON THE ROOF. ATTEMPTED TO LAND AND FINALLY WAIVED OFF, AND RETURNED TO [TAN SON NHUT.] WE THEN GOT IN OUR CARS AND DROVE DIRECTLY TO THE [USAID APARTMENT COMPLEX.]

WE WENT UP TO OUR ROOM, AND THERE WAS TALK AMONG OTHERS THAT WERE THERE THAT THIS MAY BE A COUP THAT WAS STARTING - A GOVERNMENT COUP. THERE WAS NOT AT THAT TIME ANY LARGE AMOUNT OF PANIC. WE WERE LOOKING OUT FROM THE BALCONY, AND WALKED UP ON THE ROOF, AND WERE LOOKING OUT TOWARD THE AIRFIELD. WITHIN 40 MINUTES TO AN HOUR, IT SEEMED THAT EVERYTHING HAD RETURNED TO NORMAL, HOWEVER, A 24-HOUR CURFEW WAS IMMEDIATELY PUT INTO EFFECT BY THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT. PERSONNEL WERE NOT ALLOWED OUT ON THE STREETS.

AS THE EVENING PROGRESSED, [STAN HUSTER, GEORGE KELLER, MR. BO, OUR PERSONNEL MAN] ALL CAME TO OUR APARTMENT - THE ONE THAT [MR. SIMPSON, BOYD MESECHER, DICK WENGENROTH, RON LEICHTY, PAUL DISCIUILLO, KEN HEMPTON AND MYSELF] WERE SHARING. THEY HAD BEEN DOWNTOWN ESCORTING VIETNAMESE EMPLOYEES, WHO WERE BEING AIR EVACUATED OUT. WITH [MR. BO WERE HIS 3 SECRETARIES] NONE OF THESE PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO RETURN TO THEIR APARTMENTS THAT NIGHT - THEY HAD TO BE ESCORTED BACK TO OUR APARTMENT BY THE MISSION WARDEN.

I RECALL THAT I WENT TO SLEEP THAT EVENING SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 10:00 AND 11:00 O'CLOCK, AND AWAKENED ONCE OR TWICE DURING THE NIGHT BY THE SHELLS EXPLODING. HOWEVER, I DID NOT BECOME TOO CONCERNED, AND CONTINUED TO SLEEP. AT APPROXIMATELY 6:00 THAT MORNING I WAS AWAKENED BY [GEORGE KELLER AND BOYD MESECHER] WHO

CAME IN AND INFORMED ME THAT WE HAD A MEETING UP AT [VAR GREEN'S] APARTMENT WITH [MR. VELTE.] THEY WANTED TO GET EVERYONE TOGETHER FOR A SHORT TALK AND BRIEFING. IT SEEMED THAT SINCE APPROXIMATELY 3:30 OR 4:00 A. M. THE SHELLS AND ROCKETS HAD STARTED HITTING [TAN SON NHUT] AND CONTINUED A STEADY POUNDING THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT, AND WAS STILL GOING ON.

I RECALL WALKING ACROSS THE ROOF OF OUR BUILDING. WE HAD TO CLIMB THE STAIRS, GO ACROSS THE TOP OF THE ROOF, AND THEN DOWN TO [MR. GREEN'S] APARTMENT. LOOKING OUT OVER [TAN SON NHUT,] ALTHOUGH IT WAS STILL DARK, IT LOOKED AS THOUGH AT LEAST A QUARTER OF THE AIRFIELD WAS BURNING ---MANY FIRES, MANY EXPLOSIONS, AND SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS. AT THIS MEETING, WE FELT THAT AT FIRST LIGHT, WE WOULD BE ABLE TO GO TO THE AIRFIELD AND START MOVING OUR HELICOPTERS AND AIRCRAFT OUT. WE HAD ALREADY RECEIVED WORD FROM [TAN SON NHUT] BY RADIO FROM [CARL WINSTON] AND OPERATIONS, THAT THEY THOUGHT AT LEAST 3 OF OUR AIRCRAFT [HELICOPTERS] WERE DAMAGED, HOWEVER, DUE TO THE STEADY INCOMING, THEY HAD BEEN UNABLE TO GO OUT AND GIVE THESE AIRCRAFT A GOOD INSPECTION.

WITH THE SUN-UP, WE WERE UNABLE TO GET PERMISSION TO FLY FROM VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE. SO, WE STOOD-BY MOST OF THE MORNING AT THE [USAID APARTMENT.] ABOUT 9:00 A. M. WE FINALLY RECEIVED PERMISSION TO FLY OUR AIRCRAFT. THE FIRST HELICOPTER TO ARRIVE AT THE USAID COMPOUND WAS PILOTED BY [JOHN FONBURG] WHO TOOK ON A LOAD OF PILOTS [HELICOPTER TYPES] AND WENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE AIRFIELD. SECOND SHUTTLE - MYSELF AND SEVERAL OTHERS - [BOYD MESECHER] AND TOOK US TO THE AIRFIELD. THAT LEFT SEVERAL PILOTS AT [259,] WHICH THEY RETURNED AND PICKED UP.

UPON ARRIVING AT THE AIRFIELD, I WENT IMMEDIATELY TO MY LEADMEN TO GET THE KEYS TO THE MAINTENANCE JEEP. AT THIS TIME - ABOUT 9:30, THE INCOMING WAS VERY HEAVY. I RECALL I JUMPED IN TO THE DRIVER'S SIDE - I HAD [PAUL DISCUILLO AND KEN HEMPTON] WITH ME, AND I ATTEMPTED TO GET TO THE ICCS AREA TO SEE HOW MANY AIRCRAFT WERE DAMAGED THERE. AS WE SWUNG OUT OF THE COMPANY AREA TOWARDS [6TH STREET - ABOUT 20 YARDS EAST OF 6TH STREET -] A SHELL EXPLODED RIGHT ACROSS FROM US ON THE [OLD WEST RAMP] AS I STARTED TO TURN THE JEEP AROUND - A SECOND SHELL EXPLODED - CLOSER THIS TIME. I CAME BACK TO THE HANGAR AREA - INFORMED THEM THAT WE WERE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GET THERE BY GROUND - WE SHOULD FLY DOWN. IN THE SOMEWHAT CHAOTIC CONDITIONS, THE MECHANICS WERE IN THE BUNKERS; THE NIGHT-SHIFT MECHANICS THAT STILL WERE ON DUTY, WERE IN THE HALLWAYS OF THE HANGAR - IN THE BUNKERS TRYING TO STAY ANYWHERE UNDER COVER.

SHELLS WERE EXPLODING EVERYWHERE VERY NEAR THE AREA. IN FRONT OF THE HANGAR, GLANCING SOUTH, I HEARD ONE [HELICOPTER] CRANKING UP, AND THEN I SAW IT [FULL PITCH AND DEPART THE ICCS AREA] IT WAS AT THIS TIME I DECIDED AND IT WAS QUITE OBVIOUS, THAT THE VNAF WERE STEALING OUR HELICOPTERS FROM THE [ICCS RAMP] THERE WERE ALSO SEVERAL VNAF PERSONNEL ON OUR RAMP AT THAT TIME, AND IT WAS AT PRACTICALLY GUN-POINT THAT WE WERE REMOVING THE PEOPLE FROM OUR AREA. I RECALL AT LEAST [2] VIETNAMESE OFFICERS] THAT I ENCOUNTERED ON THE RAMP, AND FORCED THEM FROM THE RAMP. THEY CLAIMED THAT THEY WERE GOING TO HELP US SAVE OUR AIRCRAFT BY GETTING IN THEM AND FLYING THEM AWAY. UPON SEEING THE AIRCRAFT DEPART THE ICCS RAMP, I IMMEDIATELY RAN

TO THE CHIEF PILOT'S OFFICE - [CARL WINSTON] - AND INFORMED HIM THAT THEY WERE STEALING OUR [HELICOPTERS FROM THE ICCS RAMP] AT THAT TIME, HE ISSUED AN ORDER TO LOAD UP SEVERAL HELICOPTERS FULL OF PILOTS AND GO DOWN TO THE [ICCS RAMP] AND GET THESE AIRCRAFT OFF OF THERE.

AS THE MORNING PROGRESSED, THE SHELLS KEPT COMING IN, [BOYD MESECHER AND MYSELF] AT FIRST, DECIDED TO SIT DOWN AND LIST BY NAME THE PERSONNEL THAT WE WOULD EVACUATE ON THE FIXED WING AIRCRAFT. IT WAS THOUGHT AT THAT TIME THAT WE WOULD KEEP A MINIMUM OF KEY MECHANICS AT THE STATION, IN ORDER TO CONTINUE THE OPERATION. HOWEVER, WHILE WE WERE IN THE SUPPLY ROOM DRAWING UP THIS LIST OF PERSONNEL WHO WOULD BE THE FIRST TO BE EVACUATED FROM OUR COMPANY AREA, [STAN HUSTER] HAD WALKED OVER TO THE MECHANICS AND PERSONNEL WHO WERE IN THE HALLWAYS AND BUNKERS, AND STATED THAT 30 PEOPLE FALL OUT TO BE EVACUATED - SO, WHEN WE CAME OUT FROM THE SUPPLY AREA WITH THE LIST - IT WAS ALREADY NON-ESSENTIAL.

THE SHELLS WERE GETTING A LITTLE HEAVIER - VERY CLOSE. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN AT THAT TIME THAT THE DECISION WAS MADE BY SOMEONE - I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHO - PERHAPS WE EACH ONE MADE IT IN OUR OWN MINDS - THAT ANYONE AND EVERYONE WOULD DEPART THE AIR AMERICA AREA. FIXED WING PILOTS WERE THEN CALLED UPON TO RUSH TO THE AIRCRAFT, START IT UP, AND TAXI IT TO THE FRONT OF THE HANGAR. [BOYD MESECHER AND MYSELF, MR. SIMPSON,] AND OTHERS STARTED LOADING THESE AIRCRAFT WITH PERSONNEL AS FAST AS THEY COULD POSSIBLY MAKE IT FROM THE HANGAR TO THE AIRCRAFT AND GET ON BOARD. WE WERE NOT COUNTING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE

THAT WERE PLACED ON EACH AIRCRAFT - SIMPLY SHOUTING "I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH", AND LETTING THE AIRCRAFT GO - TAXI UP ANOTHER AIRCRAFT, AND SIMPLY LOAD IT FULL.

AFTER WE HAD COMPLETED LOADING THE GROUND PERSONNEL AND MECHANICS ON BOARD [THE FIXED WING AIRCRAFT, AND THE FIXED WING AIRCRAFT HAD DEPARTED,] THE [HELICOPTERS] THEN PICKED UP THE KEY PERSONNEL, AMERICANS WHO WERE REMAINING IN THE AREA, AND SHUTTLED THESE PERSONNEL OVER TO THE DAO COMPOUND AREA, WHERE WE HAD AN ALTERNATE AIR TO GROUND RADIO AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS SET UP. THESE PERSONNEL INCLUDED: [MR. VELTE, MR. GREEN, CARL WINSTON, DICK WENGENROTH, ED REID, PAUL DISCUILLO AND RON LIECHTY.] OPERATIONS WAS THEN ESTABLISHED IN THE [DAO AREA.]

I RECALL THE FINAL MOMENTS ON THE RAMP - ALL PERSONNEL WITH THE EXCEPTION OF [KEN HEMPTON AND CAPT. ED ADAMS] HAD DEPARTED THE AREA, AND I WALKED ACROSS THE RAMP TOWARD THE [CITCA HANGAR WHERE CAPT. LANNIN HAD JUST LANDED A HELICOPTER 04X.] I CALLED BACK TO [ED ADAMS] AND ASKED IF EVERYTHING WAS ALRIGHT. HE SAID IT WAS - HE WAS READY TO LEAVE. [KEN HEMPTON] WAS GOING WITH HIM ON THE [C-46.] I THEN GOT IN WITH [CAPT. LANNIN] AND WE DEPARTED THE AIR AMERICA RAMP. WE FLEW TO THE [ROOF-TOP OF 259.] IT WAS 12:00 AT THIS TIME.

APPROXIMATELY 12:10 WE LANDED ON THE [ROOF OF 259]- SHUT DOWN AND STARTED TALKING AMONG THE PEOPLE THAT WERE THERE ABOUT OUR PLANS, AND WHAT OUR NEXT PLAN OF ACTION WOULD BE. AT THIS TIME IT WASN'T CLEAR TO ANYONE, AND THE ORDER OF THE DAY SEEMED TO BE "STAND BY". I RECALL [CAPT. LANNIN] AND MYSELF TALKING AND

WE DETERMINED THAT, IN OUR MINDS, BY 12:30 WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING IN THE WAY OF FLYING - GETTING OUT OF THERE - STARTING TO MOVE PEOPLE.

OUR AIRCRAFT HAD ONLY 400 POUNDS OF FUEL ON BOARD - OR LESS THAN 400. WE DECIDED THAT OUR FIRST PRIORITY WOULD BE TO GO TO THE SHIPS THAT WERE ANCHORED OFF THE COAST OF [VUNG TAU] IN ORDER TO GET FUEL. DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE AIR AMERICA RAMP HAD BEEN EVACUATED, AND THE AREA ITSELF HAD BEEN CONSIDERED UNSAFE FOR LANDING.

WE WAITED UNTIL 12:30 AND THE ORDER WAS STILL TO "STAND BY". WE SAID WE WOULD GIVE THEM APPROXIMATELY 10 MINUTES TO DETERMINE WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO, AND THEN WE WOULD PROCEED TO REFUEL OUR [HELICOPTER] AND BE READY TO FLY. AT 12:40 THERE WAS STILL NO SET ORDER AS TO WHAT WE WERE SUPPOSED TO DO. WE CRANKED THE [HELICOPTER] - ON BOARD IN THE PASSENGER COMPARTMENT WAS [DAVE TOLIVAR] AND SEVERAL VIETNAMESE TYPES, AND WE DEPARTED FOR [VUNG TAU] OFF THE COAST TO THE SHIPS.

I RECALL OUR FIRST LANDING WAS ONBOARD THE SHIP CALL-SIGN [BOOKCASE TWO] - OKLAHOMA CITY [DAVE TOLIVAR] AND OUR PASSENGERS DEPARTED THE AIRCRAFT THERE. WE WERE UNABLE TO OBTAIN FUEL - WE LIFTED OFF, AND THEY ASKED US "WOULD WE DITCH THE AIRCRAFT?" [CAPT. LANNIN] INFORMED THEM IT WAS A NEGATIVE, WE HAD TO GET FUEL AND WE MUST RETURN TO [SAIGON] IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT A [NAVY HELICOPTER] OVERHEAD [SEARCH AND RESCUE TYPE] INFORMED US THAT HIS HOME PLATE WOULD REFUEL US IF WE WOULD FOLLOW HIM. WE FOLLOWED HIM TO HIS SMALL SHIP AND OBTAINED FUEL.

AFTER REFUELING, WE FLEW BACK TO [SAIGON] AS WE FLEW BACK

OVER THE CITY, SMALL ARMS COULD STILL BE HEARD. WE CAME IN THE SOUTH PART OF TOWN. THE OTHER AIRCRAFT AT THIS TIME HAD STARTED LOADING PERSONNEL OFF THE ROOF-TOPS AND SHUTTLING THEM TO THE [DAO COMPOUND] AREA. WE WOULD MADE APPROXIMATELY 2 TO 3 SHUTTLES DEPENDING ON FUEL, AND THEN FLY BACK TO THE SHIPS ANCHORED OFF THE COAST FOR REFUELING.

WE LANDED BACK AT 259 AT APPROXIMATELY 2:30 P. M. ON THE ROOF-TOP, AT THAT TIME, I SAW [CAPT. ROBERTS] WITH SEVERAL VIETNAMESE FAMILY TYPES. [MR. TWIFFORD] WAS STILL ON THE ROOF AT THAT TIME ASSISTING IN THE LOADING OF THE AIRCRAFT. [CAPT. LANNIN] AND MYSELF WERE ABOARD [4X] AND CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE AFTERNOON, THE SAME AS THE OTHER [HELICOPTERS] PICKING UP PASSENGERS [FROM THE ROOF-TOPS OF THE BUILDINGS] AND SHUTTLING TWO TO THREE LOADS TO THE DAO AREA, AND TAKING ANOTHER LOAD, AND RETURNING TO THE SHIPS OFF THE COAST - DROP THE PASSENGERS, REFUEL AND RETURN.

AT APPROXIMATELY 5:30 OVER THE WATER, WE WERE RUNNING VERY LOW ON FUEL - WE FINALLY SECURED ON BOARD THE [U.S.S. HANCOCK] THIS COMPLETED OUR DAY, AND WE TOLD THE CREW - THE NAVY PERSONNEL AND MARINES ONBOARD THE HANCOCK, THAT WE WOULD BE RETURNING TO SAIGON THE NEXT MORNING TO CONTINUE THE EVACUATION. WE DID NOT FEEL THAT THE CITY WOULD FALL WITHIN THE NEXT FEW HOURS - OR EVEN THE NEXT DAY.

SEVERAL OF THE ITEMS I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO VERIFY, OR MAKE A STATEMENT TO, ARE THE NUMBER OF GFE TYPE PARTS THAT WERE INSTALLED ON COMPANY TYPE AIRCRAFT. TO THE VERY BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, THESE ARE THE ITEMS:

06X - WE HAD INSTALLED 2 MAIN ROTOR BLADES - GOVERNMENT EQUIPMENT PROCURED THROUGH SUPPLY, AND FUNDS WERE TRANSFERRED TO PAY FOR THESE, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

ON PFG 47000 - WE HAD INSTALLED A MAIN TRANSMISSION, 2 EACH MAIN ROTOR BLADES, AN ENGINE, 2 TAIL ROTOR HUB END BLADES.

ON PFG 470001 - WE HAD INSTALLED 2 EACH MAIN ROTOR BLADES, TAIL ROTOR HUB AND BLADE ASSEMBLY, 2 EACH CYCLIC SERVO ASSEMBLIES HYDRAULIC.

ON PFJ - WE HAD INSTALLED 2 EACH MAIN ROTOR BLADES, TAIL ROTOR HUB AND BLADES.

ANOTHER ITEM - IT WAS AT APPROXIMATELY 3:00 O'CLOCK THE 29TH THAT [HELICOPTER 843 UH-1H] WAS SEEN BESIDE THE DAO AREA IN THE OPEN FIELD, WHERE IT HAD CRASHED. EYE WITNESSES REPORTED THAT IT HAD BEEN FLOWN BY VNAF CREW, AND THAT IT EVIDENTALLY LOST, OR STRUCK THE GROUND AND THEN LOST, [THE TAIL ROTOR.] THE AIRCRAFT WAS BADLY DAMAGED UNDERNEATH - HARD LANDING - AND EVIDENTALLY RAN UNTIL IT RAN OUT OF FUEL - SAT THERE ON THE GROUND TURNING, UNTIL THE FUEL WAS FINALLY EXHAUSTED.

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[SAM/RW]
AIR AMERICA, INC.